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GENOCIDE IN TIMOR LESTE HAS NOT YET ENDED

INTRODUCTION

First I would like to extend my deep gratitude for the government and the people of the US who have given me an opportunity to share my suffering and those of my brothers and sisters in Timor Leste (East Timor). My name is Vicente Soares Faria and I am a lecturer at the University of Timor Leste. I experienced and closely witnessed the atrocities committed by the Indonesian military (TNI) in Timor Leste.

There have been too many tragic events in Timor Leste. Perhaps if I have to tell the story about them one by one, I'll need a whole year. Considering the limitation of time, I will reveal several related incidents which happened recently and have caused the death of hundreds of East Timorese

After the Indonesian government [under Habibie] changed its position with regards to the process of resolution to the political status of Timor Leste, many cases of human rights violations occurred in that region. There are variety of cases ranging from intimidation, terror, provocation, kidnapping, arbitrary arrest, looting, and burning to killing and mass murder.

These cases happened intensively and systematically throughout the territory of Timor Leste. In the following section I will try to describe several cases I vividly remember. Maybe stories about these cases have reached you already so my presence here only to confirm their truth.

1. Alas Case, November 1998.

The militia and TNI provoked several young people and the Falintil.Falintil and the youth group retaliated by attacking a military post and caused 2 members of the TNI to die. In turn TNI took vengeance not against Falintil, but on the civilians living in the villages by arresting them, burning their houses, and killing some of them; many disappeared. The number of people who died during this incident was more than 40 and it's not yet clear how many people disappeared because Indonesian military does not allow any group to conduct an investigation in that area.

2. Turiscai Case, November 1998

The paramilitary terrorized and intimidated civilians. They killed 2 civilians in the process. This incident caused 500 people to take refuge in Dili. Some of them stayed in Becora and the rest lived in the house of Manuel Carrascalaõ.

3. Atabae Case, November 1998

Paramilitary under the leadership of Joao Tavares intimidated and terrorized the village people who were suspected to be pro-independence. They arrested and abused several civilians. This caused about 300 people to take refuge at the CNRT office in Dili, and at the house of Mr. Canciõ Pereira in Dili.

4. Maubara Case, February 1999

In early February a militia named Red and White Iron Rod (BMP) was established under the leadership of João Tavares, Eurico Guterres and Manuel Sousa. This group terrorized and intimidated civilians.

5. Liquiça Case, 5 April 1999:

Red and White Iron Red (BMP) attacked some youth and pro-independence people killing two people and injuring seven others severely. This attack happened at the border of Maubara and Liquica and it was totally supported by the members of the Indonesian military.

6. Liquiça Case, 6 April 1999:

The paramilitary and the TNI forces committed mass killing at the residence of Father Rafael do Santos. More than 40 people clearly died, but their bodies are not yet returned to their family. The detail of this incident will be told by a friend here who happened to be one witness who escaped the killing.

7. Dili Case, 12 April 1999

The paramilitary groups held a show of force in front of the Governor's office in Dili during an open, grand ceremony which was supported by the government and the military. One militia leaders, Eurico Guteres, announced the intimidation and terror in this ceremony attended by members of militia groups from 13 sub-districts. Eurico said that he was determined to sweep out all resistance leaders and supporters of East Timor independence if they won't follow the orders of the militia leaders, i.e. supporting autonomy under the auspices of the Republic of Indonesia. The names of pro-independence leaders mentioned during the ceremony were Mario Viegas Carrascalaõ, Manuel Viegas Carrascalaõ, Leandro Isaac, David Dias Ximenes, Domingos Sousa and other pro-independence activists.

This kind of terror and intimidation had made these leaders and activists, as well as the ordinary people who support independence, go into hiding, whether in the jungle, at the Bishop's residence, at the residence of other priests or nuns, or fled out of Timor Leste to Indonesia or even out of Indonesia. This incident was followed by the mass killing at Mr. Manuel Carrascalao's house on April 17, 1999

7. Dili Case, 17 April 1999

The pro-integration militia held yet another grand ceremony in front of the governor's office which was attended by the local authority and military officials. They made an oath while drinking dog's blood and then began to launch what has been termed 'combing operation' against the pro-independence supporters. The operation started with a tour de force surrounding Dili, attacking houses of allegedly pro-independence supporters, shooting randomly, injuring and killing people and forcing people to hoist the red and white flag [Indonesian flag] in their houses.

This operation ended with killing the civilians who took refuge at the house of Manuel Carrascalao. These victims, about 157 people, had stayed in the house since November last year because of the terror and intimidation in their village Liquica. Thirteen people died, many of them brutally injured and many disappeared. One of the dead victims was the son of Manuel Carrascalao, Manuel Intan Carrascalao.

The militia action on April 17, 1999, also burned down the houses and cars of the leaders of CNRT in Dili, Leandro Isaac and David Dias Ximenes, as well as the house and 2 cars owned by other pro-independece figure, Jermano Hernan. They also burned down two public transportation vehicles owned by the local population.

The bodies of the dead victims were not returned to their families but taken by the Indonesian security officials to a military hospital. During this rampage, the Indonesian military officials did not do anything to prevent nor to challenge the militia attack on the unarmed civilians. They allowed this brutal attack happened without any obstacle.

9. Dili Case, April 18, 1999

A bloody clash happened in the eastern part of Becora, Dili. The militia group, Aitarak, under the leadership of Eurico Guteres shot a group of young people who allegedly supported pro-independence. Two people died during this incident.

On the same day there was a news that the Indonesian military secretly sent 150 militiamen to Jakarta attack and kill the leaders and activists of pro-independence group who live outside of East Timor. This explained why a high official within the present regime who is an East Timorese, Mario Viegas Carrascalao (member of the president special advisory council) chose to leave Indonesia to Portugal because he was one of the main targets of the death threat sent by the militias. Meanwhile other leaders and activists of the pro-independence remain in hiding or flee out of Timor Leste because of the intimidation by the militia supported by the ABRI.

D. CLOSING

Based on my experience in the territory, just as I briefly described above, the main source of the problem and human rights violations in Timor Leste is the presence of the TNI in every incident of torture and killing. The resolution of Timor Leste problem has to be put in the frame of democracy, justice and peace. This condition will not exist in Timor Leste if the militia armed by the TNI are not disarmed and disbanded and the TNI withdrawn from the territory. This task is the responsibility of the international community, especially the UN. The UN has the moral obligation to implement the resolutions regarding the East Timorese problem passed by the Security Council of the UN itself. This is a manifestation of respect toward human rights as it is reflected by the UN Charter itself.

With our 23 years experience under the Indonesian regime at least several cases mentioned above serve as a proof of the ABRI atrocities against us. Thereby we demand that:

1. The US government as a member of the UN Security Council pressures the Indonesian government and the TNI to immediately disarm the militia and withdraw their troops from East Timor;

2. The US government, which claims to be the pioneer of democracy and human rights, participate more actively in supporting the attempts made by UN, government representatives from Portugal and Indonesia in resolving the problem of East Timor in a democratic, just and peaceful way.

3. The US government help the UN to send their peacekeeping troops to East Timor in order to secure the ballot which will be held in the coming August.

4. The US government send an independent humanitarian team which will join the UNHRC and the Churches in Timor Leste to help the refugees in different parts of Timor Leste at this very difficult time.

Hereby my testimony and hope. It is our expectation that the suffering of the East Timorese finds its place in the heart of the government and the people of the US. Your involvement and support is very much necessary to carry out a peaceful process for resolving the East Timor problem. Your values of democracy will be at stake in the struggle of the Maubere people.

Long live democracy in America and long live the struggle of the Maubere people!

Timor Leste, 4 May 1999

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